



PUBLIC SPACE APPLICATION REVIEW

DATE: March 19, 2010
TO: Public Space Committee
FROM: Joshua Ghaffari, Citywide Planner
SUBJECT: 3612 Legation Street, NW

APPLICATION-IN-BRIEF

Applicant: Karen Martino (Authorized Agent)
Location: The site is a residence at 3612 Legation Street NW. It is located on the south side of Legation Street NW between Chevy Chase Parkway NW and Nevada Avenue NW. It is located in a R-1-B zoning district.
Proposal: The applicant is requesting the replacement of a paved driveway and walkway with steps in the public space in conjunction with new construction of the residence.

BACKGROUND

The Office of Planning received the public space application for review on February 18, 2010.

BASIS OF REPORT

The Office of Planning (OP) has reviewed the application, considered existing site and adjacent site conditions, and completed research on the site to prepare this report. There are several polices in the Comprehensive Plan and DDOT's Design and Engineering Manual that relate to this application:

Comprehensive Plan

Policy UD-2.2 Designing for Successful Neighborhoods

The sense of place in the Districts neighborhoods is a function of their cultural history, physical features and visual qualities. This is especially evident in both historic row house neighborhoods as well as single family neighborhoods where particular set backs, architectural styles, and building forms prevail. In neighborhoods of high architectural quality and strong identity, a greater emphasis on design compatibility and appropriate scale is needed.

Policy UD-2.2.1 Neighborhood Character and Identity

Strengthen the defining visual qualities of Washington's neighborhoods. This should be achieved in part by relating the scale of infill development, alterations, renovations and additions to existing neighborhood context.

Action UD-3.1-C: DDOT Public Space Permits

Ensure that all public space permits, including but not limited to permits for dumpsters, electric wiring, tree removal, excavation, parking, fences, retaining walls, signs and banners, sidewalk cafés, curb cuts, and special displays, are not inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and contribute to the policies laid out ... for the use of street space.

Policy T-2.4.1: Pedestrian Network

Develop, maintain, and improve pedestrian facilities. Improve the city's sidewalk system to form a network that links residents across the city.

KEY ISSUES

The proposal is for a new driveway and walkway with steps to be installed on the front of the property in conjunction with construction of a new home.

This site is located in a neighborhood that is well served by a complete alley network. Access to off-street parking on private property is preferably made through alleys and not from the public street where curb cuts cross sidewalks. Sidewalks are an important part of the pedestrian network of the District, and curb cuts that increase the opportunity for conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles should be avoided.

There may be alternative locations for access to off-street parking on this site that should be investigated. The applicant has access to a 15' public alley along both the side and rear of the property. All options should be fully explored before ruling them out as viable alternatives.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The proposed curb cut to off-street parking is for a property that has access to a 15' alley. All alternatives for providing access to private property other than across a pedestrian sidewalk should be fully investigated as part of reviewing this application.

The Office of Planning recommends that this application be denied.